

# 39 Types of Thought Process

By: John Spacey, March 12, 2016; [<https://simplicable.com/new/thought-processes>]

Thought is the process of perceiving and making sense of the world or perhaps the universe. It includes several distinct types and approaches:

1. **Abductive Reasoning:** Formulating theories to explain what you observe.
2. **Abstraction:** Modeling ideas with concepts that differ from concrete reality.
3. **Analogical Reasoning:** Using an analogy to develop understanding and meaning.
4. **Analytic Reasoning:** Reasoning based on facts that require no interpretation based on experience.
5. **Backward Induction:** Reasoning backwards starting with potential conclusions.
6. **Cognitive Biases:** Patterns of thought that lead to suboptimal results such as poor decisions.
7. **Cold Logic:** Logic that fails to consider human factors.
8. **Conceptual Thinking:** The identification of patterns and abstractions in information.
9. **Conjecture:** The ability to guess at theories when information is missing.

10. **Contemplation:** Deep reflective thought that involves absolute focus on an idea for an extended period of time.
11. **Convergent Thinking:** The process of finding the "correct answer" by following predetermined steps.
12. **Counterfactual Thinking:** Thinking about the impossible. For example, thinking about past choices not taken that are now impossible.
13. **Creativity:** Creating new and unique thoughts and products of thought.
14. **Critical Thinking:** Disciplined, systematic thinking that arrives at an opinion, judgment or critique.
15. **Divergent Thinking:** The ability to solve problems by considering a large number of solutions in a creative and exploratory way. Often contrasted with convergent thinking.
16. **Emotional Intelligence:** The ability to recognize and read emotions in yourself and others and use emotions in a directed way.
17. **Flow:** Flow is a state of focus in which a person is absorbed by tasks. Considered important to productivity.
18. **Generalization:** The ability to find general theories that explain observations.
19. **Group Cognition:** Social thought processes such as conversation, debate and peer review to build and challenge ideas.

20.**Heuristics:** Heuristics are practical approximations that aren't guaranteed to be optimal. They can be calculated quickly and are often used to make decisions or react to fast moving situations.

21.**Imagination:** The ability to think about things beyond your direct experience or beyond present realities. Allows simulations of ideas to support creativity, decision making, problem solving and prediction.

22.**Inductive Reasoning:** A process of formulating theories to explain observations that allows for guesses.

23.**Inference:** Inferring new facts from what you know.

24.**Instinct:** An innate tendency towards a complex behavior. For example, it has been suggested that people tend to be instinctively curious and social.

25.**Internal Monologue:** Thinking in words.

26.**Introspection:** The process of examining your own thoughts, emotions and thought processes.

27.**Intuition:** The ability to acquire knowledge and make judgments almost instantaneously without conscious thought. Carl Jung defined it as "perception via the unconscious."

28.**Judgement:** Judgement is the process of evaluating information to guide actions and decisions.

29.**Logic:** Logic is the discipline of valid reasoning. It is essentially a formal approach to rational thought. However, logic has limitations that don't

apply to rational thought. For example, some systems of logic can only consider true or false with nothing in between.

30.**Metacognition:** Thinking about thinking.

31.**Mind's Eye:** Visualizing with your mind including both realistic visualizations from memory or imagination and visual abstractions.

32.**Motivated Reasoning:** Using logic to support a choice that's primarily driven by motivations such as desires and fears.

33.**Prediction:** Conjecture about future events typically supported by experience and information such as trends.

34.**Rational Thought:** A state of being reasonable. Often associated with logic. However, rational thought may use natural language, visual abstractions, heuristics and partial truths that go beyond the capabilities of formal logic.

35.**Reasoning:** A broad term that includes most types of thinking but excludes emotional thought processes and intuition.

36.**Situational Awareness:** Thought processes that deal with fast moving situations such as riding a bicycle. Related to perception, comprehension, judgment, intuition and heuristics.

37.**Social Cognition:** The ability to successfully read and navigate social situations.

**38. Speculative Reason:** Reason that is theoretical as opposed to practical in nature. Speculative reason includes things such as contemplating philosophy.

**39. Thought Experiment:** Testing ideas in your head or on paper without need of acquiring real world data. Often involves either a proof from first principles or use of an analogy.

### **Thinking:**

Abstraction, Analytical Thinking, Cognition, Cognitive Abilities, Cognitive Biases, Concept, Consciousness;

Decision Making, Design Thinking, Educated Guess, Emotional Intelligence, Fallacies, Four Causes, Generalization;

Good Judgement, Human Factors, Idealism, Ideas, Independent Thinking, Information, Knowledge, Learning, Logic, Meaning;

Mental Experiences, Mental State, Mindset, Objective Reason, Opinion, Optimism, Perception, Personal Values, Perspective;

Positive Thinking, Practical Thinking, Problem Solving, Reality, Reason, Reflective, Thinking Salience, Scarcity, Mindset;

Selective Attention, State of Mind, Subjectivity, Systems Thinking, Thinking Win-Win, Thinking Wishful, Thinking Worldview;